Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
Advanced Systems & Concepts

SUCCESS STORY

Precision Air Drop ACTD Increase in Afghanistan, Saving Lives

Supplies dropped in Afghanistan from C-17aircraft using Joint Precision Airdrop Delivery System

Airdrops increase in Afghanistan, sustaining forces in remote areas and reducing attacks on resupply efforts, thanks to the Joint Precision Airdrop Delivery System (JPADS) ACTD.

Previously, parachute resupply was chancy. If dropped too high, winds might cause resupplies to miss drop zones. If dropped too low, enemy ground fire might hit aircraft. To overcome the problem, the JPADS ACTD was initiated in 2004, resulting in an airdrop capability up to 24,500 feet, and hitting pre-planned targets within 50 meters. Here's how it works:

1.*Terrain and weather downloaded to mission planner*

2. Aircraft launches to drop zone

3. Wind measuring device thrown from aircraft on first pass near drop zone

4. Mission planner receives wind data, calculates when/where to release load(s) and (if used) wirelessly updates GPS-guided parachutes

5. Aircraft releases load(s) "dumb" ballistic or GPS-guided parachutes

6.Parachute guided by GPS or mission planner to updated coordinates

The ACTD was accelerated with warfighters urgently needing resupplies in Afghanistan. Since 2006, more than 1,000 airdrops have been made, delivering more than 20 million pounds. The number of airdrops has risen, reducing helicopter and ground resupply convoys' exposures to attacks. In addition, airdrops have provided a tactical edge, delivering more ammunition and/or fuel for combat. And, more than 25 bases have been resupplied—many of which cannot be resupplied by other means. Referring to the drops, General Arthur Lichte, USAF, commander Air Mobility Command, said, "We're doing it because it saves lives."

For more information on the ACTD/JCTD program, visit: www.acq.osd.mil/jctd/ .